

SENATE BILL 4

By Harper

AN ACT to name certain routes in Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County in honor of the late Rosa L. Parks, The Mother of the Modern Civil Rights Movement.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges in honor of those exemplary public servants who have worked with purpose and commitment to improve our society; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Rosa L. Parks, who served and continues to serve as an inspiration to all people who embrace justice, equality, and peace; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a forty-two-year-old seamstress, quietly refused to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama bus and was arrested for her lonely act of calm defiance; Mrs. Parks thus ignited the modern civil rights movement and inspired freedom-loving people throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks became actively involved in the burgeoning civil rights movement in 1943, when she became Secretary of the Montgomery, Alabama, Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks's heroic action on December 1, 1955, was the impetus for the formation of the Montgomery Improvement Association, led by the young pastor, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; under Dr. Martin Luther King's inspirational leadership, the Association spearheaded a boycott of the city-owned bus company, which lasted 381 days and fueled a new quest for justice among Americans so long aggrieved; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Parks's righteous cause was brought to the attention of the world after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled segregated public transportation unconstitutional, thereby setting the stage for the wholesale dismantling of all segregationist laws; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Rosa Parks and her husband and fellow civil rights activist, Raymond Parks moved to Detroit, Michigan; there Mrs. Parks continued her commitment to society and lifelong public service as a legislative aide to U.S. Congressman John Conyers, Jr., from 1965 until her retirement in 1988; and

WHEREAS, throughout her life, Mrs. Parks fought tirelessly for the civil rights of minorities in this country, and after her husband's death in 1977, Mrs. Parks founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development; based on Mrs. Parks's philosophy of quiet strength, the organization's central mission is to motivate youth to reach their highest potential; and

WHEREAS, for her unparalleled pursuit of justice and equality for humanity, Rosa Parks was awarded the NAACP's highest honor, the Spingarn Medal, in 1979, and in 1980, she was awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize; Mrs. Parks received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996, the highest honor the American government bestows upon a civilian, and in 1999, she was presented the Congressional Gold Medal by President Clinton; and

WHEREAS, after her death in 2005, at the venerable age of 92, her casket was placed in the rotunda of the United States Capitol, so that the nation could pay its respects to the acknowledged Mother of the Modern Civil Rights Movement, a woman whose courage in the face of inhumane and discriminatory practices served as a catalyst for improving the lives of so many of her fellow Americans, both black and white; and

WHEREAS, it was with a strong sense of reverence and admiration for her commitment to human equality and civil rights for all people, that this General Assembly designated December 1st as "Rosa Parks Day" in honor of the bountiful life and indelible legacy of Mrs. Rosa Parks; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her pioneering work as The Mother of the Modern Civil Rights Movement, there are many other excellent reasons why certain segments of Metro Center Boulevard and 8th Avenue North in Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County should be named in honor of the late Rosa L. Parks; and

WHEREAS, at its intersection with Jefferson Street, the proposed Rosa L. Parks Boulevard would offer the most breathtaking view of downtown Nashville, and several historic entities would also be on or near the proposed route, including the Farmers Market and the First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill; and

WHEREAS, several facilities named in honor of prominent African American Nashvillians would be located on or near the proposed Rosa L. Parks Boulevard, including the Ted Rhodes Golf Course, the Charles E. Davis Foundation Learning Center, and the Z. Alexander Looby Center, Theatre, and Library, and Rev. Dr. Enoch Jones Boulevard would intersect the proposed route; and

WHEREAS, as a crowning achievement, the new Museum of African American Music, Art, and Culture would be located at the intersection of the proposed Rosa L. Parks Boulevard and Jefferson Street; and

WHEREAS, for these and other reasons too numerous to describe herein, this General Assembly most fervently believes that a certain route in Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County should be designated "Rosa L. Parks Boulevard"; now, therefore,
BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the following segments of Metro Center Boulevard and 8th Avenue North in Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County are hereby designated "Rosa L. Parks Boulevard" to honor the memory of an extraordinary woman who served her fellow African Americans and her country with courage and conviction as The Mother of the Modern Civil Rights Movement:

Metro Center Boulevard (U.S. Highway 41-A, State Route 12) from its intersection with Clarksville Pike (U.S. Highway 41-A, State Route 112) eastward and then southward to its intersection with Interstate 65, where such route becomes 8th Avenue North;

then southward on 8th Avenue North (U.S. Highway 41-A, State Route 12) to such route's intersection with James Robertson Parkway;

then southwestward on 8th Ave North/James Robertson Parkway (U.S. Highway 31/41, State Route 6) to such route's intersection with Broadway (U.S. Highway 70).

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the route delineated in Section 1 as "Rosa L. Parks Boulevard".

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.